Certifications and Assessment Options
Business Management And Administrative Services

Standardization of Assessment and/or Certification of BMAS Graduates

A research study was funded by the Arizona Department of Education to determine what proficiency assessments were available and appropriate for Arizona to adopt to assess student proficiency in the BMAS competencies. Results of the study indicated there is no single assessment and/or certification, which can be used to assess student performance for all of the BMAS competencies. Alternative forms of assessment such as portfolios are now being investigated to address this performance measure for BMAS programs.

In the chart below, a number of assessment and/or certifications are described, which through the research were found to address a number of the BMAS program competencies. You may want to investigate the assessments and certifications further.

Results: National Certifications and Assessments Currently Available

The International Association of Administrative Professionals (IAAP)
http://www.iaap-hq.org/CPS/cert_overview.htm

Student certification available only to students enrolled in Associate or Bachelor Degree programs. Requires additional 2-4 years of experience after leaving school.

- **Certified Professional Secretary (CPS)**

American Management Association (AMA)
http://www.amanet.org/index.htm

Offers certificates to completers of their packaged curriculum modules and examinations. Can contract with state department of education for schools to incorporate modules/examinations in existing courses.

- **Certificate in Management**
- **Success Skills Certificate**
- **Certificate in Customer Satisfaction**
- **Business Communication Certificate**
- **Certificate in Finance and Accounting**

Microsoft

http://www.microsoft.com/traincert/mcp/officespecialist/officespecialist.asp

Certification by examination. No education or work experience required to sit for the examinations. Three levels of certification available:

Master: Pass all five exams: Word™ (expert), Excel™ (expert), PowerPoint™ (comprehensive), Access™ (core) and Outlook™ (core)

Expert: Pass one of the exams: Word™ (expert), Excel™ (expert)

Core: Pass one of the exams: Word™ (core), Excel™ (core), PowerPoint™ (comprehensive), Access™ (core) and Outlook™ (core)

- **Microsoft Office Specialist (MOS, formerly MOUS)**

Corel

http://www.corel.com/learning/cert_program/index.htm#cce

Certification by examination. No education or work experience required to sit for the examinations.

- **WordPerfect™ – Proficient and Expert**
- **Quattro® Pro™ – Proficient**
- **Corel® Presentations™ – Proficient**

BrainBench

http://www.brainbench.com

Commercial vendor offering "job role certification program", covering job roles that have been developed using the O*NET classification system of the U.S. Department of Labor and BrainBench subject matter experts. Certification by examination. No education or work experience requirements.

- **Administrative Assistant**
- **Customer Service Representative**
- **Manager/Supervisor**
- **Business Tools**
- **Administrative Skills**

- **Essential Skills**
- **Customer Service and Help Desk**
- **Office Software __x__** (including Microsoft, Corel, Lotus applications)
- **Internet Applications __x__** (including Explorer, Netscape, AOL)
- **Operating Systems __x__** (including Windows, Macintosh)

National Occupational Competency Testing Institute (NOCTI)

http://www.nocti.org/index.htm

Non-profit vender serving consortium of states, NOCTI offers standard job ready assessments. NOCTI also can contract with a state department of education to create customized assessments for business programs.

- **Office Assisting**
- **Administrative Assisting**

- **Business Information Processing**
- **Business Management** (under development)

Office Proficiency Assessment & Certification (OPAC) http://www.opac.com/
> Commercial vender with testing software to assess job readiness in clerical skills and many software applications. Pre-assessment for MOS. User can create custom tests.

Results: State Survey (see attached for details)

- At present, no state requires a specific national certification of program graduates. Many programs suggest that the MOS certification could be a target or capstone achievement for graduates.

- A small number of states have gone with mandatory statewide exit exams. These exams are offered either through job assessment vendors (e.g., NOCTI) based on a contractual agreement with the state or are created within the state. The state pays for testing (and test development if necessary). District funding is usually linked to completion of the tests, although it is not necessarily linked to numbers of students passing the tests.

- States opting not to use statewide standardized assessments cite the following reasons for their decision:
  - Cost of testing
  - Expense and security issues of developing/maintaining a proprietary test item bank at the state level
  - Mandatory academic exit exams are increasing in number; there is resistance to apparent excessive testing of students

- No state currently has a comprehensive portfolio format for business students. There are a variety of competency checklists that are used to award a state or local "certificate" of mastery. These checklists are completed by instructors based on classroom assessments or completed by employers based on work experience under an internship or co-op program. Most states have exemplary portfolio designs that are created locally and promoted within the state as a "best practice".

Recommendations for Next Steps

- Create a survey to determine which certifications and/or assessments are recognized by industry andconsidered viable and valuable credentials for graduates.
- Survey a sample of Arizona employers and national experts in skill standards issues for business programs.
- Survey this sample for recommendations on portfolio content and format.
- Explore options for statewide assessment of students using contracted services of job skill assessment vendors and/or contractual relationship with American Management Association for integrated curriculum leading to AMA certifications.

Survey of States

Statewide Standardization

Oklahoma
The state has contracted with BrainBench and the American Management Association to create assessments. "Occupational Completers" must pass at least one approved BrainBench examination or obtain an AMA certification. "Program Completers" must pass 85% approved BrainBench tests and complete a full AMA program.

Connecticut
Mandatory statewide exit exam required of all students completing 2 credits of CTE program courses. Custom exam created by NOCTI for Connecticut with state validation. No record on transcript or diploma. Schools encouraged to provide certificates.

Kentucky
All CTE programs are subject to accountability on state-created assessments, with IT the only exception being allowed to substitute a national (A+) certification for testing. Examinations created by educators and validated by industry. State certification is noted on diploma and transcript and is recognized and endorsed by employers statewide.

Pennsylvania
Schools are required to select NOCTI or other PDE approved tests that match local career and technical program curriculum content as closely as possible. Statewide cutoff scores establish a competency standard. Students scoring at or above the norm receive Pennsylvania Skills Certificate.

Ohio
All students in the last class of a series of CTE classes are required to take the Ohio Career-Technical Competency Assessments (OCTCA) (created and administered by Ohio State University). At present there are no industry licensure or certification examinations that may be substituted.

Texas
Competencies are defined in the TEKS framework. Districts select a "coherent sequence" of recommended courses and establish the required assessments. TEKS have built-in assessments. Many districts also recommend the use of national assessments (e.g., NOCTI) or certifications (e.g., MOS), but they are not required.

Florida
Legislation pending which will require national certification in all programs in which it is available. If not, programs will be required to select or create a competency certification process. School

New York
Most schools are not certified and there are no requirements beyond local assessment. Certified districts and BOCES have more stringent requirements leading to a CTE endorsement on the diploma. Certified programs typically use NOCTI assessments, but MOS certification or approved local assessment are okay.

Virginia
As of 2004, students must have 6 "verified credits" for graduation. CTE courses may provide 2 credits if the student earns national certification. To date MOS is the only one approved. Students with a B average or national certification can earn CTE Seal on diploma

Hawaii
Voluntary participation in student assessment using industry validated checklist of skills. Certificate of Mastery awarded by school. No state monitoring.

North Carolina
VoCATS Course Blueprints are used throughout the state to standardize curriculum. All students are tested with the VoCATS assessments at the end of a course. A passing grade is required only if the student desires articulation of the course credit to a community college. Test scores are recorded on transcripts. Nationally-recognized credentials such as OPAC or CPS are encouraged, but at students expense.

Nebraska
Strong locally-governed system which acknowledges norm and criterion-based assessments, classroom based and purchased test items. State offers excellent STAR assessment toolkit with numerous rubrics to help teachers.

California
Voluntary participation in ACE examinations created by WestEd. State pays for testing. Insignia on diploma and note on transcript for passing ACE graduates. State does not track ACE activities.

Michigan
Strong locally-governed system with no state intervention to date. Awaiting recommendations from Career Pathways program.

Washington State
No statewide program at present. Undergoing assessment of competencies.

Wisconsin
A local-control state with no requirement for national certification. Students who successfully earn MOS certification earn Cooperative Education Skills Standards Certificate.

Illinois
National credentialing (e.g., CPS) recommended when available. As strong local control state, best solution for foreseeable future is embedding the assessment in instruction provided at the training site.

Local Control